

# Saturday Magazine.

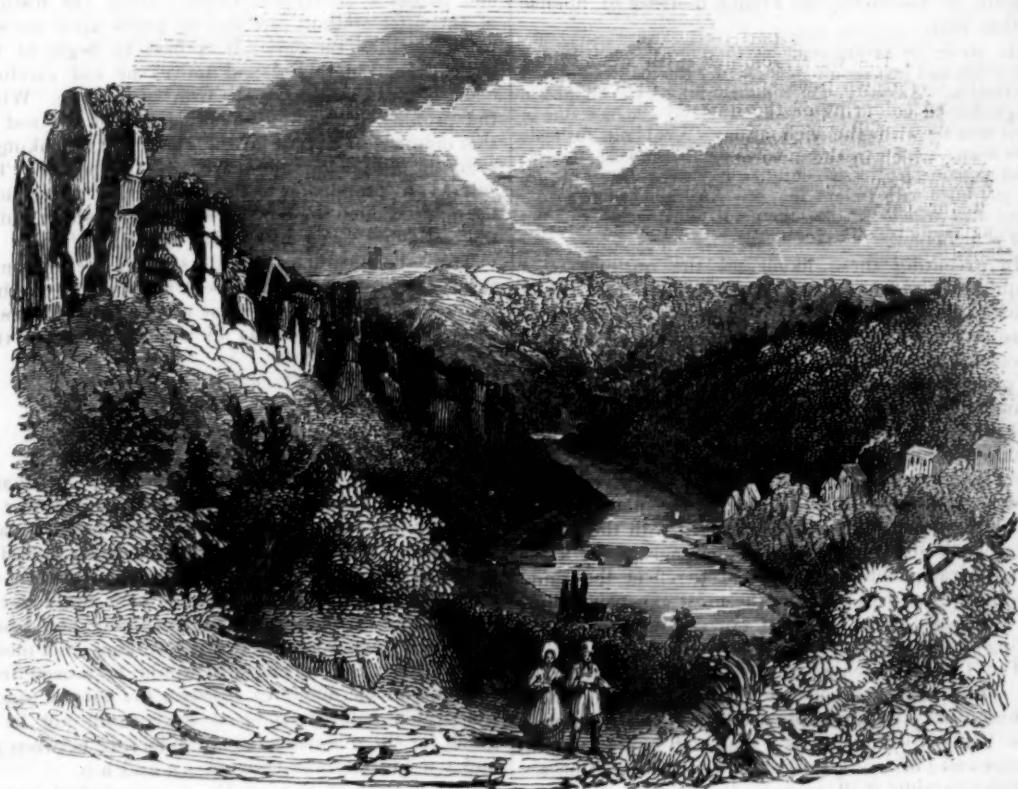
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ONE PENNY

## THE WYE AND MONMOUTHSHIRE. No. V



NEW WEIR, ON THE WYE.

Lives there a man, so lost to Nature's charms,  
That would not shun, when scenes like these invite,  
The crowded city—and, with joyous step,  
Through fair Siluria trace his devious way!  
There rosy health dwells in the mountain breeze,  
And plenty in the vale. The greenwood dell  
Teems with luxuriance, and the river's marge  
(As swift from moorland-steeps the waters flash),  
With views romantic greets the enraptured eye.

### WHITCHURCH—GREAT AND LITTLE DOWARD—NEW WEIR—MONMOUTH.

IN resuming our account of the "Wye Tour," we will begin by noticing those singular oval tub-shaped skiffs, used by the fishermen on the Wye, below New Weir, and some other Welch rivers, called "coracles," pronounced *truckles*, or *cruckles*, by these primitive sportsmen, "the remains, perhaps, of the ancient British navigation, which the least motion will upset, and the slightest touch may destroy." These tiny boats are so light, being constructed of canvass or hide, well pitched and stretched over a slender frame-work of wood, that the fishermen carry them on their backs from one part of the river to another.

The scenery around the sweetly-retired village of WHITCHURCH is pleasing; and the Great and Little Doward hills, which bear the name of King Arthur's Plain, (the latter an eminence of peculiarly fine out-

line,) boldly rise in the background with a remarkable effect. Upon the summits of both these hills are interesting remains of ancient British hill-forts. The western, or most accessible side of the Great Doward, is strongly fortified by entrenchments. Three circular terraces wind up to the summit of the Little Doward, which is supposed to have been defended by Caractacus in his war with the Romans. In a valley between the hills is a romantic cavern, called "King Arthur's Hall," evidently nothing more than the level of a worn-out iron mine.

After leaving Cymon's Yatt, and on our approach to NEW WEIR, which Gilpin terms "the second grand scene on the Wye," the view consists of exquisite crags, thrown into fine confusion by falls from the upper rim. These crags are full of projections and recesses, and heaps of ruin, all shrubbed and weather-holed, and present a most romantic variety of shelves, rude arches, clefts, and mimic towers. Between these and the opposite bank of rock-wall and hanging wood, the river, rapid and confined, roars hastily along. In front are rich wooded eminences, rising above or lapping over each other. Along the banks is a series of meadows, of deep rich green, just enlivening the dusky solemn gloom of the narrow dell. A single rock-column gives an

agreeable variety to the side crags. It is only one of several others similar, which were standing many years ago, insulated from the main wall of rock, which have either fallen, or, more probably, have been destroyed by the remorseless lime-burners, who, regardless of the beauties of the Wye, are ever employed in supplying the ravenous lime-kiln, which "in grim repose expects its evening prey." The rock-pillar above alluded to, is said to have been denominated *Bear Croft*, from an eminent barrister, who used to attend the assizes at Monmouth.

The scenery at New Weir is really magnificent:—lofty masses of rock on both sides of the river, (which is wider than usual in this part,) rise almost perpendicularly from the water, clothed with an infinite variety of fine grown trees and pendant shrubs; the pale subdued colouring of the limestone crags finely harmonizing with the rich and ever-varying tints of the foliage, which in the autumn especially has a singularly exquisite effect. New Weir, which was constructed for catching salmon, was removed some years ago, but the site of the Weir is marked by the impetuosity of the stream, which tumbles and roars amid large masses of rock in its channel, that have either been hurled by the violence of tempests from the heights above, or swept down by the sudden irruption of a winter's flood. An iron forge, emitting clouds of smoke and sullen sounds, formerly stood here, and jarred with the associations of the scene; but it is now a dilapidated ruin, and nothing disturbs the deep tranquillity but the noise of the waters, and the sighing of the wind among the branches of the trees. We agree with Roscoe that "to view the scene to the best advantage, the tourist should descend from the summit of Cymon's Yatt, by the winding road traversed by the mules which brought coal from the forest when the works were used."

Below New Weir, scenery of the same character continues to arrest the attention. The river here makes a curve, and the voyager floats swiftly past High Meadow Woods on the left, and the precipitous rocky eminence of the Great Doward on the right. At the end of this reach, a mass of rock covered with shrubs and parasitical plants presents itself, the river in front forming a pool, backed by the wild purple summit of the Little Doward. A finer scene from the water it is almost impossible to conceive. Further down, a detached cluster of rocks, called the "Three Sisters," skirt the shore, near which in a short reach, there is a pool called Martin's, supposed to be nearly seventy feet deep; a greater depth than in any other part of the river. At the extremity of the reach from King Arthur's Vale, the castellated form which the Great Doward assumes at this point, again presents itself to view. The Leys House, the residence of Mr. Blakemore, M. P. for Wells, at the foot of the Little Doward, on the right, with a woody amphitheatre in front, terminates the scene. The river, after passing this turn, gently meanders through a pleasant valley, "midst fields and pastures green, in flat, swell, and hollow," and leaving the solitary church of Dixon on the right, at last reaches "delightsome."

MONMOUTH, which is finely situated at the termination of a gently undulating valley surrounded by lofty wooded hills, and nearly encircled by the rivers Wye and Monnow, the latter uniting with her "peerless" sister a short distance below the town.

The British name of Monmouth was *Monywy*, evidently derived from its peninsular situation on the rivers Mon and Wye. The present English name is obvious—the mouth of the Mon or Monnow. It is supposed by Horsley and other eminent antiquaries,

to be the site of the station *Blestium* of Antoninus; Camden, however, places that station at Old Castle, or Longtown, a small sequestered village on the banks of the Monnow, about three miles distant from Llanthony Abbey, where there are some remains of a very ancient fortress. In corroboration of this opinion, it may be observed that no vestiges of the Romans, with the exception of some coins, have been discovered either on the site, or in the immediate vicinity of Monmouth. The town was fortified at a very early period, and was surrounded by walls and a moat, only small portions of which are now visible. Of the four gates, the ancient gatehouse called the Monnow Gate, is the only one which remains entire; and is remarkable not only from its primitive style of construction, but from its position in the centre of a bridge. The remains of the castle, once an important edifice, situated on the ridge of an eminence on the north bank of the Monnow, chiefly consist of a ruined tower. In front of the Town Hall, which stands in Agincourt-square, is a statue of Henry the Fifth, who was born at Monmouth on the 9th of August, 1387. The magnificent and graceful spire of the parish church of the blessed St. Mary, which rises to a height of 200 feet, distinguishes Monmouth as much as the "Heaven-directed spire" of Ross. It is the only relic of the ancient priory church, and contains a fine peal of eight bells, which were brought from Calais by Henry the Fifth, who seems to have taken much interest in his birth place. The tourist ought not, therefore, to omit a visit to the steeple; and he will be further rewarded by a view of great beauty from the parapet. The body of the ancient church was pulled down and rebuilt in 1740; in a style, we are sorry to say, utterly at variance with the design of the original structure. The organ is, perhaps, not surpassed in tone by any other in the kingdom, nor is the service of our venerable church anywhere more admirably conducted. The remains of the priory, which was founded in the reign of Henry the First, by Wyhehoe de Monmouth, for Benedictine monks, although small, are of considerable interest. A richly ornamented projecting window is pointed out, (on doubtful authority,) as that of the library of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the celebrated historian, who was created Bishop of St. Asaph in 1152, but afterwards became Abbot of Abingdon, where he died. He translated a history of Britain from the British, which presents very dubious pretensions to veracity. The church of St. Thomas, called "Over Monnow," is of great antiquity, and has one of the finest recessed doorways with zigzag mouldings, that we remember. It will well repay inspection. The general style of the building is early Norman, but some parts are said to be British. The principal street of Monmouth is broad and well built; and the town altogether is a very neat and pleasing one, and groups with a striking effect from every point of view. There are two excellent inns,—the Beaufort Arms, and King's Head. A very extensive new market is now in progress in a fine situation above the lofty bank of the Monnow. Although the county town, we are not aware that it possesses any species of manufacture deserving of mention. In the old time it was celebrated for its *caps*, which are wittily spoken of by Shakspeare in his play of Henry the Fifth. It is said that this trade was removed to Bewdley, in Worcestershire, in consequence of a great pestilence which swept away the inhabitants. The county goal by the side of the Monnow, near the extremity of the town, is a compact castellated building, erected at the end of last century, on Mr. Howard's plan.

## PRINCIPLES OF CLEANLINESS IN NATURE.

NEATNESS or cleanliness of creation is one of the most striking provisions in nature, as it is also one which seems to have been nearly overlooked by naturalists, or viewed as if it was confined to a few animals. It will be seen, on the contrary, that it is one of the Creator's leading designs, and that careful provisions have been made for it both in the animal and vegetable department of life.

The contrivance for this purpose in plants, consists in the nature of the surfaces, most remarkable in the leaves, where this object is sometimes attained by a high polish and great density, at others by a waxy secretion, at others again, by a minute texture of the surface, resembling that of hairs and feathers, or by means of actual down or hairs; as, in the flowers, the globular velvety surface, which enhances the colours by dispersive reflection, serves for this end also. These prevent the lodgment of water, which is itself injurious, and, with that, of all liquid matters which might soil them; while the dust which might have adhered in a dry state, is easily dislodged by the first shower. How effectual the provisions are, is evident; since a dirty plant (to use an expressive term) is scarcely ever seen, peculiarly exposed as they are to the adhesion of soil: and thus does the vegetable world present that universal look of cleanliness and neatness, which is as striking as if there was a hand perpetually employed in no other office; preserving an order that we cannot maintain in our possessions, without constant labour. If all the dead portions, in leaves and flowers, with little exception, detach themselves, the effect is the same, and so, perhaps, was the purpose; while we know how disagreeable the appearance is, when, by housing them, we here interfere with the proceedings of nature. But if we overlook the contrivance as well as the intention, considering the effect, like all else, as a matter of course, so do we also, not merely forget to note another provision for maintaining the neatness of the vegetable creation, but neglect the very fact itself, as if this also could not be otherwise. Yet the least reflection will show that the result would be incredible but for experience. The simple power of vitality, maintaining the circulation, is not only sufficient to retain the feeble petal in its place against the power of the storm, but to maintain all the most delicate and tender flowers in perfect shape, rigidity, and order, during the time that they were ordained to last. We cannot imitate these objects, without much stronger materials, and ligatures, and gums; yet the cistus, with its almost cobweb petals of a few hours, is a structure of perfect strength, retaining the elegant form assigned to it, till the term of its life has arrived.

The same cleanliness, with the same decided intention to produce it, pervades the animal creation, and under many more forms than it is convenient or proper to notice. To man, it has been permitted to do what he pleases; and he is not slow in disobeying the universal command, which the other animals have received through instincts for this purpose, and through provisions for rendering neatness attainable by them: as thus also has he contrived to make some of his followers what he too often is himself. And if we forget to note this also, we should certainly have found it a very difficult problem; to devise the means of keeping all this multitudinous world of animals in that state of neatness, in which we find it some difficulty to preserve ourselves, peculiarly exposed as they are to soil. Yet a dirty animal, like a dirty plant, is scarcely to be found: the very mole and the

earthworm, inhabiting the soil itself, are without a stain; the snail is clean notwithstanding its adhesive surface; the purity of the swan, in the midst of the mud, is almost proverbial. In the birds, indeed, we see a necessity for neatness, while we find the instincts as strong as the provisions are perfect. But in the terrestrial animals, there is no utility, nor does any inconvenience arise from the reverse; whence we must conclude, that the Creator's intention was simply neatness, order, cleanliness; a virtue to which we are willing to give a place, in words at least, among the minor ones, as we term them.

In these, and in the birds, the essential provision is similar to that in plants, consisting in the structure and superficial texture of hair and feathers. Popular prejudices term these animal substances less cleanly than vegetable ones; the facts are the direct reverse, as common experience in our own clothing should show. They do not absorb water, and, like plants, they repel the adhesion of what is dry. Thus do the quadrupeds keep themselves clean with very little effort, as the birds do, under that preening which they have been commanded to delight in. In insects the provisions are much more striking. The most naked larvæ are always clean, like the earthworms, inhabit where they may. In others a peculiar texture of the surface, like that of hair, produces the same effects; and thus do we find down, or hairs, as in the bee, the butterfly, and the caterpillars, preventing all adhesion of the several substances to which they are exposed; but, as if to satisfy us of the Creator's decided intention on this subject, we find some of these animals provided with the very utensils of cleanliness which we construct for ourselves; furnished with brushes, together with that attached instinct of neatness which we daily see in use in the house-fly, while it would be easy to add much more to the same purpose from the records of natural history.

There is yet more provided for the same end, if in a very different manner, though in these cases, seeing that provision is made for the salubrity of the atmosphere and the waters, and for the feeding of animals, we easily overlook the second, if not secondary purpose. Dead fishes are rendered luminous, that they may be discovered and consumed before they become offensive. On the land, the consumption of carcases is provided for by the instincts given to several beasts and birds of prey, and, beyond all, by the appointment of the different larvæ, which are destined to this food; while, to make that expedient availing, such is the produce, and such the rapidity of growth, as to have made naturalists remark, that the progeny of three or four flies is sufficient to consume a horse. And assuredly, for the same end, has there been implanted in almost every animal that instinct, through which they seek concealment when about to die; while how effectual this is we know, since with, I believe, the sole exception of the shrew mouse often choosing a gravel walk for this purpose, we scarcely ever meet the dead body of a wild animal.

[MACCULLOCH'S *Proofs and Illustrations of the Attributes of God.*]

HE that enlarges his curiosity after the works of nature, demonstrably multiplies the inlets to happiness; therefore we should cherish ardour in the pursuit of useful knowledge, and remember that a blighted spring makes a barren year, and that the vernal flowers, however beautiful and gay, are only intended by nature as preparatives to autumnal fruits.

—JOHNSON.

IT is a shame for a man to desire honour because of his noble progenitors, and not to deserve it by his own virtue

—ST. CHRYSOSTOM.



## ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BIBLE FROM THE MONUMENTS OF ANTIQUITY. No. XIX.



ALTARS ON HIGH PLACES.

## ALTARS.

ALTARS, or special places for offering sacrifices to the Deity, and, after corruption spread over the earth, to the false gods of the heathen, were used from the most remote antiquity. Cain and Abel erected altars when they presented the first sacrifices of which we have any record after the Fall, and Noah's first care was to build an altar after the deluge had subsided. Altars, therefore, were used before temples were erected; they were built sometimes in groves, sometimes on the highways, and sometimes upon the tops of mountains. The most ancient form of idolatry was elementary, that is, the object of worship was some power or principle of nature,—the sun, the earth, the powers of production and destruction. With such a form of worship notions of gloomy sublimity were associated, and hence the dark recesses of groves and the sterile tops of lofty mountains, were chosen for the altars of the oldest nations. So prevalent was the custom, that the phrase "worshipping on high places," is frequently used to signify idolatry in the Old Testament, and we find that the early Persians in the East, and the Druids of England and Ireland in the West, were equally remarkable for erecting their altars in groves and mountains. The worshipping on high places was strictly forbidden to the Jews; not merely because the custom had a tendency to produce idolatry, but also, because the elementary form of idolatry was the worst, the most cruel, and the most debasing. It was before these altars in groves and mountains, that human sacrifices were most frequently offered, that parents whose natural affections were blighted and destroyed by dark superstitions, made their children pass through the fire to Moloch; and it was in such places that licentiousness and depravity were systematically made a part of public worship.

The idolatry into which the Jews so frequently lapsed while they were governed by judges, was a compound of cruelty and lust, and hence the severe visitations to which they were exposed by the righteous indignation of Jehovah. It does not appear

from the monuments, that "altars on high places" were common in Egypt, though there are some traces of worship in groves; but among the Canaanites and the heathen nations surrounding Palestine, this abominable form of idolatry prevailed, and its tendency to gratify the worst passions of man's nature, too frequently led the chosen people of God to forsake his pure and simple worship, to throw off their allegiance to their Almighty benefactor, and to sink themselves below the level of the beasts of the field.

But this form of idolatry was not only condemned by Holy Writ, it was prohibited by the most enlightened of the heathen themselves; for we find, in Grecian history, that the introduction of the worship of Bacchus into Europe was strenuously resisted by several monarchs of Thrace, Thessaly, and Thebes; and that the Bacchanalian rites were watched with anxious jealousy by the statesmen of the Grecian republics. The Bacchanalian howlings, revelries, and debaucheries, practised on the tops of mountains, were clearly borrowed from the Asiatic worship on high places; indeed, all the legends respecting Bacchus are so decidedly Oriental and even Indian in their character, that the Asiatic origin of the worship cannot be doubted for a moment. As civilization advanced in Greece, the Bacchanalian rites were discouraged, but an attempt was made to introduce them into Italy, where they produced so much licentiousness and depravity, that the Roman Senate forbade them to be practised under pain of death. The strict rules prescribed for the construction of the altars which the Israelites were to use, afford a remarkable proof of the Divine inspiration of the Pentateuch, because several of those rules were designed not only to guard against the corruptions of the Egyptians, with which we may suppose Moses to have been acquainted, but in a still greater degree to prevent them from adopting the abominations of the Canaanites, into whose land Moses had never entered.

Altars were at first made only of turf, but they were afterwards made of marble, of wood, and even

of horns, like that of Apollo at Delos. The altars used by the patriarchs were of stone, and were generally of rude construction; thus, the altar which Jacob set up at Bethel, was simply the stone which had served him for a pillow, and the altar of Gideon was a stone before his house. Although little credit is due to the Arabian tradition that Abraham visited Mecca, and erected there an altar to the true God, there can be no reasonable doubt that the religion which Ishmael established among his descendants was purely patriarchal; and therefore, the Kaaba, or sacred stone, so enthusiastically venerated by Mussulmans, and which was regarded as holy long before the age of Mohammed, might have been the primitive altar established by the founder of the Arab race. The traditions respecting the Kaaba are probably mixed with the legends respecting an altar erected by Adam, which we find in the Jewish Talmud, and among the early fathers of the Christian church in Syria. They also speak of an altar erected by Enoch, which they believe to have escaped from the devastation of the deluge; and though such traditions have no foundation in fact, they are valuable so far as they illustrate what we so frequently find in Scripture, the veneration shown to places where altars were erected.

This is particularly remarkable in the history of Jacob; the place on which he laid himself down to sleep had no peculiar mark or sanctity; the stone which he chose for his pillow was probably a block that, but for subsequent events, would have remained undistinguished for ever; but when he erected it as an altar, and consecrated it with oil, the stone became sacred for all who passed near it, and the place where it was raised continued to be called Bethel, or the house of God, through a long series of ages. Jacob found, it would appear, that the altar remained in its place when he was returning back to Canaan, after

so many years servitude under Laban; and there is reason to believe that it had not been removed during the centuries that elapsed between that event and the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. The undoubted preservation of the Kaaba, notwithstanding the conquest of Mecca by the Karmatians, and the Jewish legends respecting the altars of Adam and of Enoch, are sufficient to explain the long preservation of Jacob's altar at Bethel, which might otherwise appear unaccountable.

The shape of altars varied in different ages and countries; they were probably at first of a square or rectangular form, sometimes rude, and sometimes fashioned with great care. Most of the ancient Greek altars were of a cubical form; and hence, when the oracle of Apollo commanded that a new altar should be prepared exactly double the size of that which already stood in the temple, a problem was given surpassing the powers of science in those days, which is well known to mathematicians under the name of "the duplication of the cube."

In the illustration at the head of this article, it will be seen that the mountain-altars were generally made of rough stones, and this is especially remarkable in the Druidical structures preserved in various parts of Britain; but when temples began to be erected and decorated with all the beauty of architecture, ornaments were added to the altars; and, as in the engraving on the next page, they were sculptured with some scene from the fabulous history of the gods, or some emblem of the deity to whom they were dedicated. Were such a custom sanctioned among the Jews, their reverence for the emblem would soon have degenerated into idolatry, as in the case of the brazen serpent which Hezekiah caused to be destroyed, on account of its having become an object of superstitious veneration. God therefore strictly prohibited any carvings on the altar.



ROMAN ALTAR AND SACRIFICE.

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy foot upon it, thou hast polluted it. (Exod. xx. 24, 25.)

Solomon appears to have enclosed the altar of unhewn stones in a grating of brass, which he overlaid with gold; and this custom was followed in the building of the second temple after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. In consequence of the superior value of the covering of the altar, we find that the ignorant and superstitious Jews in our Saviour's time revered it more highly than the altar itself, and this is one of the many instances of their homage to external appearances for which they were reprehended by our blessed Redeemer.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. (Matt. xxiii. 16—21.)



ALTAR MARKED WITH SYMBOLS.

The ease with which such an altar was prepared, elucidates another important part of Scripture,—the contest between Elijah, the single prophet of the Lord, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, in the reign of Ahab.

When the ten tribes of Israel separated from the kingdom of Judah, Jeroboam, in order to prevent the annual pilgrimage of his subjects to Jerusalem, erected two golden calves as national sanctuaries at Bethel and at Dan. He selected those places, not because they were the most convenient, but because they were already revered by his subjects. Bethel, as we have already said, was the place where Jacob erected an altar after his miraculous vision; and in Dan idolatry had commenced by setting up the idols stolen from Micah, not long after the death of Joshua. But all Israel did not follow the idolatry of its sovereigns; and the kings of the ten tribes erected fortresses on their frontiers to intercept the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem. In the reign of Ahab, the abominable rites of the Sidonian idolatry were introduced by Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, and she persecuted, or rather caused her weak and wicked husband to persecute all who refused to worship Baal, the national deity of the Sidonians. This ini-

quity was punished by a drought and famine, which endured several years; at length Elijah was sent to Ahab, and induced him to assemble all the prophets of Baal, on Mount Carmel, in the presence of the congregation of Israel.

And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, it is well spoken. (1 Kings xviii. 21—24.)

The priests of Baal accepted this extraordinary challenge; they quickly erected an altar and prepared a sacrifice, but their summons to their idol for a manifestation of his power proved fruitless. "They called upon Baal from morning even until noon, but there was neither voice nor anything that regarded." Elijah waited until the time for offering the evening sacrifice had arrived; the altar required by the divine law was one which could easily be prepared; he took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. (1 Kings xviii. 31, 32.)

The stupendous miracle by which Jehovah proved to the people that he was the Lord of heaven above and the earth beneath, is sufficiently known. But it deserves to be remarked that the simplicity of the worship ordained by the true God greatly enhanced this triumph; for Elijah in this contest stood alone, and had not the altar been one which could be easily constructed by a single person, he would scarcely have been able to compete with the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal.

The reverence for altars was very great among the ancients; no greater insult could be offered to a conquered nation than to throw down its altars or pollute them, and hence Ezekiel dwells very forcibly on this circumstance, in his denunciation of divine vengeance against the idolatry of Israel:

Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate: that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. (Ezek. vi. 3—7.)

This feeling was common also to European nations, and hence the motto "*Pro aris et focis*," that is, "for altars and firesides," was assumed when a nation was engaged in defensive war for the protection of religious worship and family comforts; that is, all which man holds dear to him. The phrase was first used by the Romans, whose veneration for their altars appears, from the monuments at Herculaneum and Pompeii, to have been equal to that of any nation of antiquity. The engraving in the preceding page illustrates not only the Roman altar, but the account we gave of sacrifices in our former article on this subject.



## THE VIOLIN.

## No. II.

## ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VIOLIN.

THE reader is of course aware of the construction of the modern Violin. A curious and somewhat fantastically shaped box, with a handle springing from one end, is the first object that strikes our attention. Four strings are tightly stretched by attachments at each end, which strings rest upon a bridge placed near their upper terminations. The strings are vibrated by means of a bow, which vibrations are communicated along the bridge to the upper table of the instrument,—then to the mass of air within the box, and again to the lower table by means of a sounding post, the ends of which touch both tables. This post is called by the French, *l'âme du Violon*, or, the soul of the Violin. The vibrations of the enclosed air are further assisted by a bar of wood enclosed within the box, and passing in the direction of its length, called *the bar of harmony*. Two apertures are made in the upper table of the instrument, of the form of an Italian S, whereby the vibrations are more freely communicated to the enclosed air. The bridge is curved, in order to allow the bow to touch either of the middle strings separately, and a hollow on each side of the case, externally, allows a freer motion to the bow while playing upon the two other strings.

The strings are attached at the lower end to pegs in the handle of the instrument, by turning of which the strings are stretched more or less tightly, and thus the instrument is tuned.

A really good Violin on this construction is a costly instrument. A good-toned Violin cannot be bought in England or France for less than fifty guineas, and many have been sold for 250 guineas. An instrument made by Stradivarius can always be sold for 100 guineas. The choice, too, of a Violin is difficult: none but a master can determine its real value. It is said that new instruments are never good; for if they have a tolerable tone at first, it will soon deteriorate. The best Violins become so by beginning with poor and insufficient tones, and gradually improving. The Violin is a slow pupil, for it does not "discourse eloquent music" under fifty years' hard practice; but it then becomes invaluable.

The most memorable Violin-makers are the Amatis of Cremona; Andreas, Jerome and Anthony Amati, and Nicolas, the son of Anthony: the latter flourished about the year 1600. This family certainly constructed the finest violins in the world, and it is supposed that the elder Amati discovered some secret connected with their successful construction, transmitted it to his sons, and that it died with Nicolas, the younger branch of the family. Their Violins are distinguished by elegance of shape, sweetness and roundness of tone.

Stradivarius, the elder and the younger, were also of Cremona. The latter was flourishing in 1700. He inscribed on his Violins the following signature,—

ANTONIUS STRADIVARIUS CREMONENSIS FACIEBAT,  
ANNO A. S.

It is remarkable, also, that Cremona produced the celebrated Guarnerius. His inscription is,—

ANDREAS GUARNERIUS, FECIT CREMONÆ, SUBSIGILLATO,  
SANCTÆ TERESÆ, 1630.

Stainer, a native of Tyrol, constructed Violins remarkable for their full and piercing tone, such as has never been equalled. His inscription is,—

JACOBUS STAINER, IN ABRON PROPE GENIPONTUM, 1647.

Albani, also a native of Tyrol, is another celebrated maker: and here we close the list, for the above are

the names of the only makers that have descended to posterity as men who accomplished what none else had done or could do,—the only element perhaps in human fame. Many a violin of these makers has been spoiled in the vain attempt to discover the secret of its workmanship; expert artists have taken them to pieces, have constructed numberless instruments with the most scrupulous attention to their model, and the failure has been, in all cases, entire. New constructions have been attempted, and scientific models founded on the known principles of sound, and yet the superiority of the Cremonese artists still remains unquestioned.

But the most valuable contribution to our knowledge of the construction of the Violin, is the experimental instrument of M. Savart. A full description of this instrument is to be found in the *Manual of Natural Philosophy*, by Mr. Tomlinson, who, we believe, was the first to lay all the details of M. Savart's Violin before English readers. We owe the following account to Mr. Tomlinson's description, as also to the report of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, on the merits of the new instrument.

M. Savart began his inquiry by endeavouring to distinguish the essential parts of the Violin from its empirical or ornamental details. He soon concluded that the vaulted form of the face and back is not a necessary part of its structure; he therefore constructed his Violin with flat surfaces, each formed of two pieces,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lines thick at one edge, and gradually tapering towards the other edge, which was 1 line thick: the thicker edges of each pair of tablets were then joined together. He next determined that the sides of the Violin ought not to be fancifully curved, but straight, in order that they might enter into undisturbed vibration from corner to corner of the instrument, and thus contribute to augment the sound. All the wood thus employed was cut and arranged in the direction of the fibres, or *longitudinally*, as it is called. The form of the instrument was that of a trapezoid, or four-sided figure, of which the lower breadth was less than that of the upper. In common Violins, the bar of harmony and the sounding-post are placed one on one side, and the other on the other side of the central line or axis of the instrument: Savart placed the bar of harmony along the central line, and thus equalized the vibratory action of both sides.

The sounding-post has usually been considered as a kind of support to the upper surface, but Savart found that its important office is to communicate the vibrations from the face to the back of the instrument, and the point at which he fixed the post in his Violin was such as to convey the sonorous vibrations more perfectly and energetically from the face to the back of the instrument.

The incisions made on the face of the instrument were next attended to. Savart covered these two openings with paper, and found the sound to be materially injured, because the enclosed air had no direct communication with the external air. He made the openings in the form of a parallelogram, that is, the edges to be straight and parallel, so that the fibres and the long margins of the holes were in the same direction, and the vibrations of the wood at those parts were rendered more symmetrical, while at the same time fewer fibres were cut than is the case with the form of the apertures usually adopted.

Before Savart mounted the various parts of his Violin, he took care that each part should perform its vibrations in a system similar to that of all the rest. He imagines that the celebrated makers before named, were aware of the importance of this principle.

The Violin of Savart was soon put to a severe test. A committee was appointed to examine and report on its merits. In this committee we find the distinguished names of Biot, Prony, Haily, Charles, together with Cherubini the composer. The report of this committee is highly favourable. The new Violin was played by Lefebvre, the celebrated Parisian violinist, alternately with a Stradivarius; and the committee could not detect any difference between the tones of the old and the new instruments, when they were played alternately in an adjoining apartment, except by a little more sweetness in the tones of the new one.

On this subject Mr. Tomlinson offers a remark in which we cordially join:—

This was probably the first attempt to reduce fiddle-making to scientific principles; and the success which attended it ought to encourage similar efforts. Savart made many violins such as we have described, which had no pretensions to elegance or high finish, but all possessing the desirable qualities which we are in the habit of attributing to the "good old" Violins. Should any of our readers be of a mechanical turn, they might construct good Violins at the cost of a few shillings, by attention to the main points of difference between the common instruments and those above described,—all of which were made by Savart's own hands.

The best harps and pianos are made in England: the best violins can now be said to be made nowhere. Savart's Violin was made several years ago; but it has never become popular, or even known in France, where we should suppose it would soon flourish like a plant in its native soil: but in England the instrument has yet to be introduced, and we venture to hope that Mr. Tomlinson's description, and the present article, will tend to bring about so desirable an effect.

#### HYMN IN HARVEST TIME.

'NEATH summer's bright and glorious sky,  
While proudly waves the golden grain,  
And through the falling fields of rye,  
Comes on the joyous reaper train—  
While nature smiles, and hill and plain  
Are tranquil as the sleeping sea,  
And peace and plenty brightly reign  
By homestead, hearth, and forest tree.  
God of the seasons, unto thee we raise  
Our hands and hearts in melody and praise.  
There is a sweet breath from the hills,  
The incense from the mountain air,  
Which from a thousand flowers distils  
Its odours delicate and rare—  
We feel its balm—we see it there  
Among the bending wheat-blades move,  
Kissing their tops in dalliance fair,  
As if its very life were love.  
God of the harvest, whence its breezes blow,  
Receive the humble thanks thy creatures owe.  
Our loaded wain comes winding home,  
Then let us rest beneath the shade  
Of this old oak, our verdant dome,  
And watch the evening shadows fade—  
O'er mount and meadow, lawn and glade,  
'They spread their deep'ning tints of gray,  
Till all the scene their hues pervade,  
And twilight glories melt away.  
God of the world, who round thy curtain throws,  
Thanks for the time of quiet and repose.  
How still is nature all around!  
No song is sung, no voice is heard—  
Save here and there a murmuring sound,  
As if some restless sleeper stirred;  
The grasshopper, night's clam'rous bird,  
Chirps gay, but all is hush beside—  
And silence is the soothing word,  
Whose spell diffuses far and wide.  
God of the universe, by night and day,  
We bless Thee for the gifts we ne'er can pay.

THOMPSON.

#### THE ADVICE OF A PHILOSOPHER.

TAKE especial care that thou delight not in wine, for there never was any man that came to honour or preferment that loved it; for it transformeth a man into a beast, decayeth health, poisoneth the breath, destroyeth natural heat, brings a man's stomach to an artificial heat, deformeth the face, rotteth the teeth, and to conclude, maketh a man contemptible, soon old, and despised of all wise and worthy men; hated in thy servants, in thyself and companions; for it is a bewitching and infectious vice. A drunkard will never shake off the delight of beastliness; for the longer it possesses a man, the more he will delight in it, and the older he groweth, the more he will be subject to it; for it dulleth the spirits and destroyeth the body, as ivy doth the old tree; or as the worm that engendereth in the kernel of the nut.

Take heed, therefore, that such a cureless canker pass not thy youth, nor such a beastly infection thy old age; for then shall all thy life be but as the life of a beast, and after thy death, thou shalt only leave a shameful infamy to thy posterity, who shall study to forget that such a one was their father. Anacharsis saith, the first draught serveth for health, the second for pleasure, the third for shame, the fourth for madness; but in youth there is not so much as one draught permitted; for it putteth fire to fire; and therefore except thou desire to hasten thine end, take this for a general rule, that thou never add any artificial heat to thy body, by wine or spice, until thou find that time hath decayed thy natural heat, and the sooner thou beginnest to help nature, the sooner she will forsake thee, and trust altogether to art. Who have misfortunes, saith Solomon, who have sorrow and grief, who have trouble without fighting, stripes without cause, and faintness of eyes? even they that sit at wine, and strain themselves to empty cups. Pliny saith, wine maketh the hand quivering, the eyes watery, the night unquiet, a stinking breath in the morning, and an utter forgetfulness of all things.

Whoso loveth wine, shall not be trusted of any man, for he cannot keep a secret. Wine maketh man not only a beast, but a madman; and if thou love it, thy own wife, thy children, and thy friends will despise thee. In drink, men care not what they say, what offence they give, forget comeliness, commit disorders; and to conclude, offend all virtuous and honest company, and God most of all, to whom we daily pray for health, and a life free from pain; and yet by drunkenness and gluttony, (which is the drunkenness of feeding) we draw on, saith Hesiod, a swift, hasty, untimely, cruel, and an infamous old age. And St. Augustine describeth drunkenness in this manner:—"Drunkenness is a flattering devil, a sweet poison, a pleasant sin, which whosoever hath, hath not himself, which whosoever doth commit, doth not commit sin, but he himself is wholly sin."

Innocentius saith,—“What is filthier than a drunken man, to whom there is stink in the mouth, trembling in the body; which uttereth foolish things, and revealeth secret things; whose mind is alienate and face transformed? There is no secrecy where drunkenness rules; nay, what other mischief doth it not design? whom have not plentiful cups made eloquent and talking?”

When Diogenes saw a house to be sold, whereof the owner was given to drink, "I thought at the last," quoth Diogenes, "he would vomit a whole house."—SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

I CANNOT call riches better than the baggage of virtue; the Roman word is better, "impedimenta;" for as the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue; it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindereth the march; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory; of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution: the rest is but conceit.—BACON.

It is an old saying, *that charity begins at home*; but this is no reason it should not go abroad: a man should live with the world as a citizen of the world; he may have a preference for the particular quarter or square, or even alley in which he lives, but he should have a generous feeling for the welfare of the whole.—CUMBERLAND.

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